

David & Denise Muslovski
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Pallet Power

Dave Muslovski had dedicated 13 good years to his wood pallet manufacturing employer only to have the rug pulled out from under him. In 1986, Dave returned home from a sales trip on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving to the horror of finding all his work belongings packed up in a box! Dave's company was downsizing due to financial constraints, and he found himself out of a job without any prior warning. Dave suddenly and unexpectedly faced a major crossroad in his life with the immediate concern of providing for his family.

Dave realized that with the 13 years experience he had garnered in the industry that he should have no trouble hooking up with another pallet company. Unfortunately, there were very few pallet companies in the area. He did not want to relocate his family. Was it time to do something on his own? Dave realized he had the knowledge to start his own pallet business, but he was not sure that he had the guts.

After discussing things over with his wife Denise, they together decided to take the risk and start their own pallet business called Iron City Wood Products, Inc. in Campbell, Ohio (near Youngstown). Together they drafted a business plan and sought the capital necessary to get things up and running. They initially had a difficult time obtaining funding, but with the help of family, their local banker and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), enough money was raised. Dave and Denise borrowed money from family members, refinanced their home and obtained an SBA guaranteed business loan for their company.

Iron City Wood Products, Inc. refurbishes used pallets, wooden crates, wood boxes, and super sacks. The company works closely with the steel mill and alloy industries located along the Ohio River Valley. Unlike its competition, the company specializes in odd size pallets built to customer specification.

Dave and Denise knew that owning and operating a business would be hard work and require long hours. In the beginning, Dave would work 20 hour days, 7 days a week. He set up a cot to sleep at the office. Dave would drive the semi truck to and from the pallet deliveries, while his brother-in-law would repair the pallets and Denise would process the paperwork. On the weekends, Denise would bring their 3 children to the plant to help out, involving the whole family in the business.

The business has turned out to be very successful. After 15 years in business, the company now has 55 employees, has a fleet of 8 semi trucks and 20 trailers, and services a 400 mile radius territory from its Campbell facility. The company processes over 800,000 pallets annually, and it generates over \$4 million in sales. The company recently opened a trucking division to haul freight for other area businesses.

Dave and Denise Muslovski have had to overcome their fair share of adversity on their path to success. Dave was born to deaf parents, while Denise was born to French speaking parents who had immigrated to the United States and struggled to learn English. Dave has also overcome some serious health issues over the years. The pallet business has proven to be challenging, but the Muslovskis never gave up.

Dave and Denise live their lives by the slogan, “a winner finds a solution for every problem, while a loser finds a problem with every solution.” They clearly see themselves as winners. With their winning attitude, the Muslovskis will ensure that Iron City Wood Products continues to prosper!